No. 662 Twopence December, 1958

LIBRARY

THE UNITARIAN

A MAGAZINE FOR FREE CHRISTIANS

SUNDERLAND UNITARIAN CHURCH

A Losing Battle Won!

Sunderland Unitarian Church, some of whose members are shown in the photograph grouped in the classic-columned porch, is now 128 years old. The building as a whole does not lend itself to photography, as the lower storey consists of shops whose fronts flank the porch on the main road. At the time when the church was erected in 1830, the whole building was designed for church use, with ample offices and schoolrooms on the ground floor, but the optimism of the founders who borrowed £500 for building the church, was not realised, and the initial debt was not paid off in the first few years, but began to grow when another £150 was borrowed in 1848, and yet another £650 ten years later, making an accumulated debt of £1,200. It was in 1858 that the Post Office leased the ground floor of the church, and they were followed by many tenants. Even with the income from lettings, the congregation throughout its history were fighting a losing financial battle, and fighting it without the possession of really suitable rooms for week-night activities.

Unitarianism in Sunderland goes back well beyond 1830. The old Presbyterian Chapel near the Corn Market is known to have had a minister in the 18th century, the Rev. Lemuel Latham, who was Unitarian in theology. Some time later there was a secession, and by 1814 a small body of Unitarians was meeting in a room in Maling's Rigg, among whom was a broad-minded

Anglican, George W. Meadley, a founder of the Subscription Library in the town. Apparently until the church was built in 1830 this congregation had no settled minister, but conducted their own services.

One of those responsible for the new building was the Rev. William Turner, of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, whose name is first on the roll of the original trustees. He laid the foundation-stone on May 14th, 1830, and the church was opened just over a year later with three Sunday services. William Turner preached in the morning for three-quarters of an hour on "The Expediency of Public Social Worship and the necessity of Holiness to its acceptable performance." The sermon incidentally, had been used 15 years earlier for the opening of the chapel at Thorne. Although the church was intended to seat about 400, about 500 people were present, but "many were seated in the aisles, the vestry and on the staircases." A similar congregation gathered for the evening service, and there was also an afternoon service, so Mr. Turner had a busy day.

The congregation has had no very long ministries, the longest recorded being that of the celebrated Rev. Robert Spears, whose first ministry it was from 1851-58. In 1851, he says' there were less than a score of people attending, "I had no stipend, and supported myself by a school. After seven years I left some hundred and twenty worshippers, and had saved the property from being sold." Even so only 60 sittings were let at that time, and the committee made an appeal to raise the number to 100, to enable them to apply for denominational grants towards obtaining another minister. From 1858 to 1874 only two settled ministers are known to have served the congregation. Before the 1870s lost, and it is now known whether most of the church records were these two ministries covered the whole sixteen years, thus exceeding the seven years' record of Spears, who founded and revived so many Unitarian causes all over the country. There were many periods in the history of the congregation without any settled minister, 1896-1900, 1916-18, 1920-22, 1937-45 and 1955 to the present time. From 1906 onwards the congregation has shared a minister with the South Shields church, and by constant efforts has contrived gradually to pay off the formidable debt of the preceding century, until this summer brought the struggle to a triumphant conclusion, and now for the first time in history the gallant band of Sunderland Unitarians faces the future free of debt and with hope and faith maintained.

CLEARANCE SALE OF

CHRISTMAS CARDS

FINAL REDUCTIONS

Six designs, 7/6 per 100, 1/- per doz., post free. Envelopes included. Send 9d. in stamps for samples to: Editor, Dunham Road Parsonage, Altrincham, Cheshire.

TRANSACTIONS OF THE UNITARIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Contents of Vol. XI No. 4.

Obituary, Herbert McLachlan, M.A., D.D., Litt.D.
—F. Kenworthy, M.A., B.D.

Presbyterians, Congregationals and the Test and Corporation Acts.
—Roger Thomas, M.A.

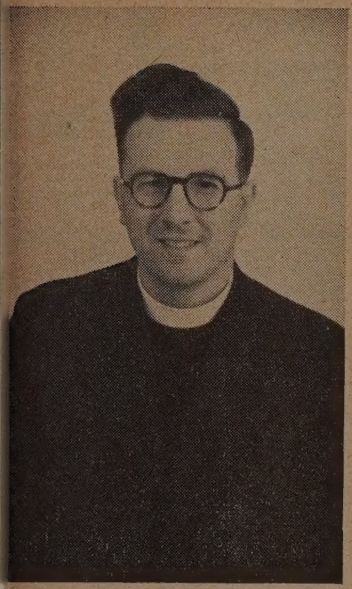
The Presbyterian Committee of Thirteen in Exeter.
—Alan A. Brockett, B.A., F.I.A.

The Free Catholic Movement
—Bruce Findlow, B.A.

Record Section and Index.

Membership 7s. 6d. per annum.

Hon. Sec.: REV. F. KENWORTHY, M.A., B.D., Unitarian College, Manchester, 14.



A NEW EDITOR

Rev. Peter B. Godfrey, B.A., of Swinton and Urmston

After more than fifty-five years of publication, *The Unitarian*, first issued in October, 1903 as **Unity**, will welcome with the January issue its third editor, the Rev. Peter B. Godfrey, B.A., minister since 1956 of Urmston and Swinton Churches, near Manchester.

The magazine was founded by the late Rev. H. Bodell Smith, a keen missionary for the Unitarian Faith, and he remained editor for 26 years, and then, at the end of 1929 handed the control of the magazine over to the Manchester District Association, which appointed the Rev. Arthur W. Vallance as editor just over two years after he had entered the ministry; so one aspect of history is repeating itself in that the third editor starts his job at exactly the same stage of his ministerial career.

The new Editor, unlike his predecessor, who was Unitarian born, came of an Anglican family and then attended a Methodist Sunday School until the age of 15, when he began to attend the Great Meeting at Coventry during the ministry of the late Rev. Richard Lee. Later he went to Sheffield University, and graduated B.A., going on to study for the ministry at Manchester College, Oxford, where he won the Mansfield Evans prize for Philosophy. Before taking up his joint ministry in the Manchester District, he married, and has recently become the proud father of a daughter—an achievement in which he has outpaced his predecessor in the editorial chair, who did not arrive at matrimony until he had served for ten years as editor.

Mr. Godfrey is a live member of the Council of the Manchester District Association, and is secretary of the Ministers' Monthly Conference, a society of ministers in the Manchester neighbourhood limited in number to 15 members, which has now been in existence for 95 years. He is usually to be seen at local Unitarian rallies, and at first was to be seen travelling about on a motor-scooter, but recently he achieved the dignity of a car, and as his two churches are several miles apart, it is no wonder that he finds such transport for himself and his family a necessity. *The Unitarian* wishes its new editor a long and distinguished editorship, and this wish of the members of the Editorial Board will no doubt be echoed by the readers of the magazine in all parts of the world.

WANTED: Organist and Choirmaster for Cross Street Chapel, Manchester; apply to Secretary, 45, Whittaker Lane, Heaton Park, Prestwich, Manchester.

CHILDREN'S CORNER

Breakfast at the Parlour

The Mayor and his valet were up early on Christmas Day. From what seemed a very early hour a gradually increasing noise was heard. Since the Mayor and the valet found it impossible to drop off to sleep again, they *had* to get up; and when the Mayor poked his head through the window he was greeted with a loud cheer. Down below were the children, forming a queue which already disappeared round the corner.

"Good gracious!" shouted the Mayor. "We're late! We must get organised!"

For the Christmas breakfast was to be held as usual in the Mayor's Parlour. So while Sammy the Soldier tried to keep order outside, the Mayor, his valet and many others moved swiftly inside. The children were then marshalled in just before the queue became quite disorderly.

They cheered when they saw the huge Christmas tree decorated with twinkling lights; they cheered the Mayor when he welcomed them; they cheered the valet when he announced the programme; and they even cheered the Duchess when she popped in to see if all was well.

With a big bag of cakes, sandwiches, pies, fruit, sweets with tea and lemonade, they had a fine time! The Mayor led the carol singing whilst the valet played the piano; and finally there was Father Christmas with yet another present for each boy and girl!

The Parlour was like a battlefield at the end; but, as the children disappeared, the Mayor said:

"That was good. The children enjoyed it and we enjoyed it. I think we all feel the better for it."

And the bells began to peal, for it was Christmas morning.

MODERN CHRISTMAS CAROL

"Away in a manger, no crib for a bed,
The little Lord Jesus laid down his sweet head,"
Now this is the story that's often been told,
For it's been handed down from the wise men of old.

But things would be utterly different to-day,
No inn, and no manger, and no bed of hay,
But a hospital ward disinfected and bright,
With skilled nurses to care both for mother and mite.

The other things also would vanish, alas!
No kings and no camel, no ox and no ass,
No shepherds abiding in fields through the night,
No singing of angels in glittering white.

There'd now be no star that would travel the night,
But perhaps a new moon, a man-made satellite,
And the only wise men bringing gifts from afar,
Would be scientists offering weapons of war.

Yet to-day more than ever the hopes of the world
Are fixed on the babe lying blissfully curled,
And the age-old glad tidings repeated again,
"On earth Peace, Good Will," shall be still our refrain.

Pamela Patterson, aged 12, winning entry for Liverpool Sunday Schools' Festival, 1958.

ESSEX HALL RE-OPENS

A. B. Downing

The opening of the new Essex Hall starts a new era in our affairs. There was a most representative gathering of Unitarians for the occasion. For most people it was probably Dr. Mortimer Rowe and Prof. Stratton (speaking for Mr. Ronald P. Jones), who most brought out the deeper things evoked by the ceremony. "We hoped and planned and prayed as the years of our waiting went by." In his wonderful prayer Dr. Rowe joined our spirits with those who had known the old building intimately, experienced all the chaos and difficulty arising from its destruction and worked unceasingly to build renewal out of its ruins. But his words made us address ourselves also to the providence of God, which made men in times past conceive of religious faith and freedom as we try to witness to them to-day. Those oddly detached and faintly dry tones of his were a marvellous medium for expressing all the deep things we expressing the deep things we felt.

And then the words of opening penned by Ronald P. Jones on his sick bed, read for us in the firm but shy accents of Prof. Stratton—words which mixed wit with fact, history and personal reminiscence. The bond of Unitarian union between composer and reader goes deep. We felt deeply Ronald Jones' enforced absence, but were lucky indeed to have his mind expressed for us through the voice of Dr. Stratton.

The rest of the proceedings had their inevitable human variety of level: Chuter Ede jovial and grandiloquent by turns; the Quaker representative truly spiritual in his friendship for us Unitarians; the Dean of St. Paul's brief, dignified and rather more aloof; the Rev. F. P. Copland Simmons making the most of the Noncomformist brotherhood which binds all free churchmen together. We heard also a friendly commissioner from the Salvation Army and two very warm speeches from Dr. Dana Greeley and Dr. Kuebler representing the Americans. The non-subscribers of Ireland, also, sent their greetings.

It is true a new headquarters does not renew a movement, but it will help us all enormously and perhaps give a new look to some of our problems and our hopes.

WOMEN'S LEAGUE JUBILEE

Manchester District League began its Autumn Meeting at Monton on October 11th with a service conducted by Mrs. Whitehouse, B.Sc., followed by a business meeting at which each branch representative handed in a bag of silver coins to hang on a Silver Tree. Flowers were presented to Miss Ruth Herford, National President, and two original Manchester District League members, Miss Storrs and Miss Leigh.

After tea came the Jubilee Pageant when branches enacted an episode in the league's history. This was colourful and interesting from the inaugural meetings in London through two world wars to the present day. The climax came when Miss Herford handed on the torch to the newest branch.

"No dear, I said 'Women's League Jubilee,' not 'cups of tea'."

NEWS AND VIEWS

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

On the eve of the opening of the new Essex Hall, the Council met at Highgate Church, and after tea the annual service of Welcome and Recognition to new members was held when the President welcomed eight new ministers: the Revs. H. N. Bacon (Great Yarmouth), T. E. Dalton (Forest Gate and Ilford), Glyn Pruce (Hale) Robert Taylor (a former Congregational minister not yet in a pastoral charge but continuing the secretaryship to the United Kingdom Alliance), Tom Wardle (Kendal), R. J. H. Williamson (Walsall and West Bromwich), Kenneth Wright, B.A. (Walmsley and Halliwell Road, Bolton), and, *in absentia*, G. Vaughan Owen, minister-elect of Capel y Groes and Cribyn.

OVERSEAS CHURCHES

AFRICA. LAGOS Unitarian Brotherhood Church reports a successful year and though lack of teachers has prevented the re-opening of a Sunday School, a Youth Fellowship has been formed to promote a spirit of Christian worship.

AUSTRALIA. MELBOURNE, Cathedral Place, records that its monthly magazine "The Beacon," has reached a thousand-copy circulation. The Spring appeal raised £370, and the Spring Fair £128, and the appeal for the Save the Children Fund £112. Support for maintaining the Sunday radio broadcast has been gratifying, and improvements to the lighting, library, and other church facilities are being carried out.

HOME CHURCHES

BATH held an All Faiths Service in September, with readings by members of the Islamic, Hindu, Hebrew, and Christian (Lutheran and Plymouth Brethren) faiths. About thirty members of the Bath International Club attended.

BRADFORD. BROADWAY AVENUE afternoon service was conducted by the Sunday School members, and the collection sent to the Land Gift Movement of Vinoba Bhava in India.

BRIDGWATER has opened a gift fund for repainting the Sunday School.

CULLOMPTON harvest collections and sale yielded nearly £22. A weekly games night for Sunday School members and friends has been started.

DITCHLING. Over £91 was raised for the new heating fund, and the new heaters are very successful.

KIDDERMINSTER New Meeting celebrated its 176th Anniversary on November 23rd when the morning preacher was the Rev. A. McLellan, Minister of Baxter Congregational Church, from which the New Meeting was a secession, and in the evening the Rev. C. Simpson, of Stourbridge and Lye.

IRELAND. BELFAST the foundation stone of the new Central Hall was laid by Miss A. McKisack, and another commemorative stone was laid by the Rev. Dr. H. J. McLauchan, using the maul that was presented to George K. Smith for laying the stone of the original hall on June 5th, 1885. ALL SOULS' Anniversary was attended by over 1,000, and on a September Sunday All Souls' welcomed a double-deck bus load from DROMORE to evening service, and an after-meeting. COMBER Church has received a legacy under the will of the late Mrs. M. A. Andrews of £500 for congregational purposes, £100 on tru0st for the buildings or stipend, and £50 on trust for the Poor Fund. KILLINCHY Church raised £286 at the Autumn Fair.

LEEDS. MILL HILL Chapel has installed an electrically heated boiler for the hot water heating system which will be thermostatic. Efforts have begun for raising funds for entertaining the General Assembly in 1959.

LONDON DISTRICT. ILFORD celebrated its centenary in October, and is busy following up its Forward Together Campaign. Distribution of literature is being extensively organised. ISLINGTON's new church building was opened on November 1st by Sir Adrian Boult. LONDON SUNDAY SCHOOL SOCIETY held a conference at ESSEX CHURCH, Kensington, on November 8th on "Making Our Schools Purposeful to Children." RICHMOND celebrated its 70th Anniversary on November 16th and its annual Civic Service attended by the Mayor and Corporation officials on November 23rd. The proceeds of the Sale of Work were £66.

MANCHESTER DISTRICT. ALTRINCHAM and SALE joint advance campaign reached high points of interest and enthusiasm at some of the week-night meetings, though with no great attendance of outsiders. The organising committee were instructed to follow up with a further series of monthly meetings to maintain the interest aroused. The District Association made the final meeting to hear the Rev. R. W. Sorensen, M.P. on "The Unitarian Faith and a United World" the occasion of its own Autumn Rally, but a very wet night and the distance from the centre of the city helped to reduce attendance from a distance. CHORLTON Church has re-wired its electric installation, and working parties have been repairing and painting the exterior. URMSTON members hope to have their new building, the hut from Cross Street, which they removed just a year ago, ready for use at the November fair. A bonfire party was held on November 5th in aid of the building fund. All the work on the building is being done by church members.

N. E. LANCASHIRE U. AND F.C. LAY PREACHERS' ASSOCIATION. At the sixth A.G.M. on October 11th, the Association was welcomed to ASTLEY by the Astley Chairman, Mr. C. Strike. At the Service of Affirmation, Mrs. F. Wager, of Preston, preached on Isa. IX. 6, "Here am I, send me." After an excellent tea at the business meeting, Coun. G. E. Hilbert was elected President The next meeting will be held at Newchurch. Comment was made about certain Unitarian churches in the district where the pulpit is occupied by Trinitarian preachers.

ROTHERHAM. The bazaar held on October 18th realised £160.

TODMORTON. In its first year the Men's League has carried out repairs to trestle tables, the kitchen hoist, school windows and walls; they have repaired the retaining wall behind the church, decorated the young men's classroom, and given much help in other ways.

THE INQUIRER
The weekly organ of the Unitarian and Free Christian Churches
Every Saturday, Price 3½d.
Obtainable from Newsagents, Bookstalls, or your Church.
By subscription, £1 3s. 10d. per annum from "The Inquirer" Office, 14, Gordon Square, W.C.1.

THE LINDSEY PRESS

THE BELIEFS OF A UNITARIAN
By Alfred Hall, M.A., D.D.
2s., by post 2s. 6d.

THE STORY OF UNITARIANISM
By Raymond V. Holt, B.Litt., M.A.
6d., by post 8d.

WHAT UNITARIANS BELIEVE
By Dorothy Tarrant, M.A., Ph.D.
6d., by post 8d.

"I'M NOT RELIGIOUS BUT—"
By Arthur Peacock
6d., by post 8d.

The Lindsey Press, Essex Hall,
1—6, Essex Street,
London, W.C.2.

UNITARIANS IN THE NEWS

Miss Clay, of Leeds, Mill Hill, has celebrated her 91st birthday.

Dr. J. K. Wood, of Sale Unitarian Church, a former lay secretary, of the Unitarian College, Manchester, has been made a vice-president.

Miss H. K. Watts, secretary of Ditchling Chapel, was recently presented with an electric fire by the congregation.

The Rev. Arthur Peacock, Hon. Secretary of the World Congress of Faiths, gave an address to the Muslim Society of Great Britain on "Prophet's Day," entitled "Muhammad through the eyes of a Christian."

The Rev. W. J. Wharton, M.A., of Grey Abbey, has been installed at Ballyhemlin for a joint ministry. The Rev. G. L. Clarke, of Rawtenstall, has moved to Park Lane, Bryn, near Wigan; the Rev. Norman Kirkham, of Liverpool, to Dudley; the Rev. E. W. Deakin, of Leigh, to Ansdell and Preston; and the Rev. C. A. Piper is taking charge at Liverpool, Hamilton Road. Resignations have been received from the Revs. L. A. Gribble, M.A., Wallasey and Chester, W. A. M. Hellaby, Ansdell and Preston, and A. E. Potts, B.A., Dundee.

N.E. LANCS. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND YOUTH COUNCIL met at Colne on October 11th, for its first annual meeting with a discussion on its objects and constitution.

THE UNITARIAN, published by Manchester District Association of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches. Annual subscription 4/-. Monthly orders, 50 copies 7/6, 100 copies 10/6 plus postage. *Business Manager:* G. HARRISON, 2, Walwyn Close, Stretford, M/cr.

Northern S.S. Federation
UNITARIAN HOLIDAY HOMES

Great Hucklow, Buxton, Derbyshire.
Telephone: Tideswell 218

A warm welcome always awaits guests at the Homes in the coldest weather. Write to the Secretary, The Homes, Great Hucklow, Buxton, Derbyshire.

THE MANCHESTER CREMATORIUM Ltd.

BARLOW MOOR ROAD, CHORLTON-CUM-HARDY
(Chorlton 3499)

The Books of Remembrance are on view and the Garden of Rest is open daily for visitors to bring flowers and sit awhile in the peace and tranquillity of this hallowed place.

For advice on cremation and the special remembrance services please write to the MANCHESTER, CREMATORIUM LTD., 2, COOPER STREET, MANCHESTER, 2. (Central 4596).

Printed by Nuneaton Newspapers, Bond Gate, Nuneaton